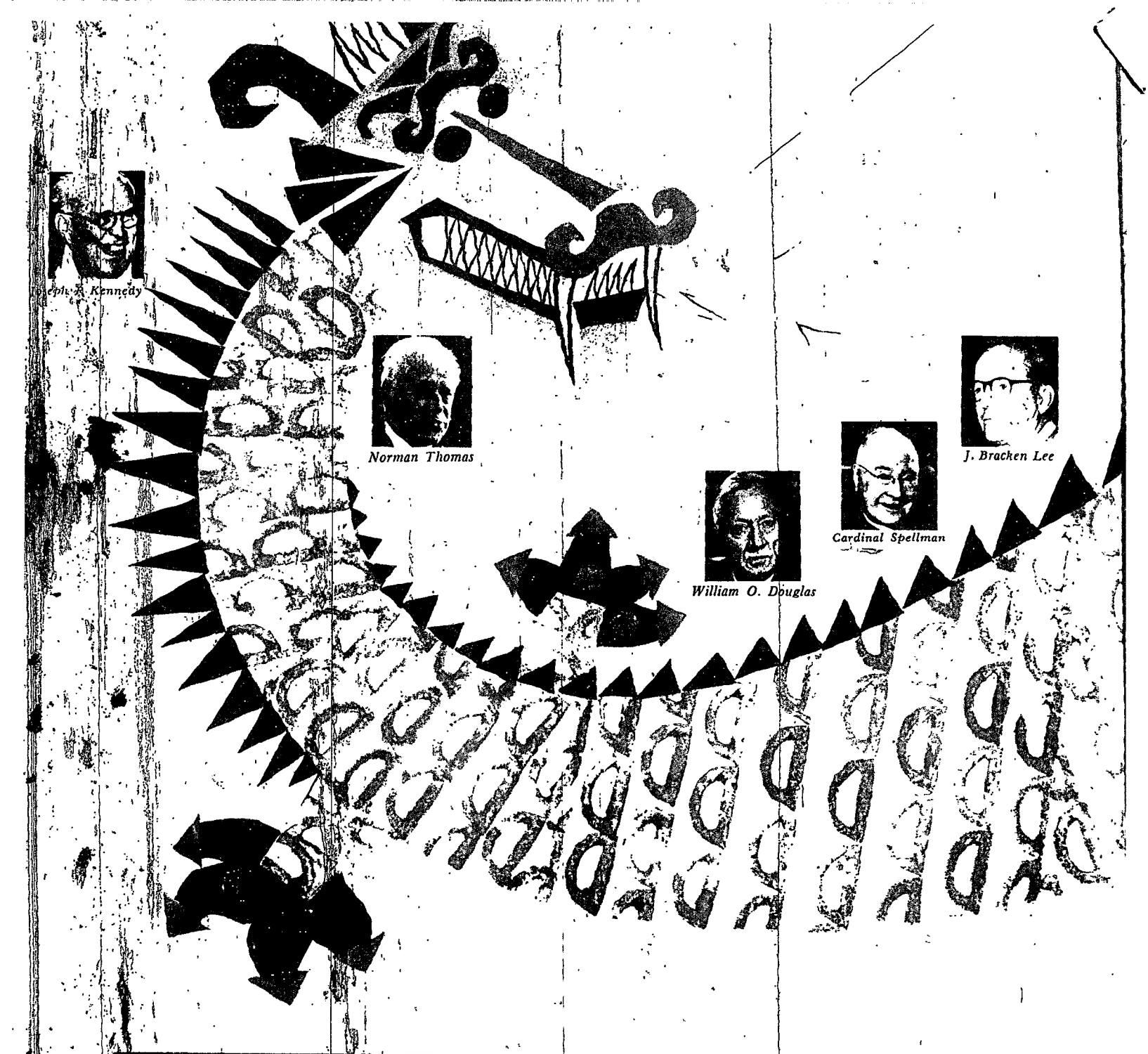


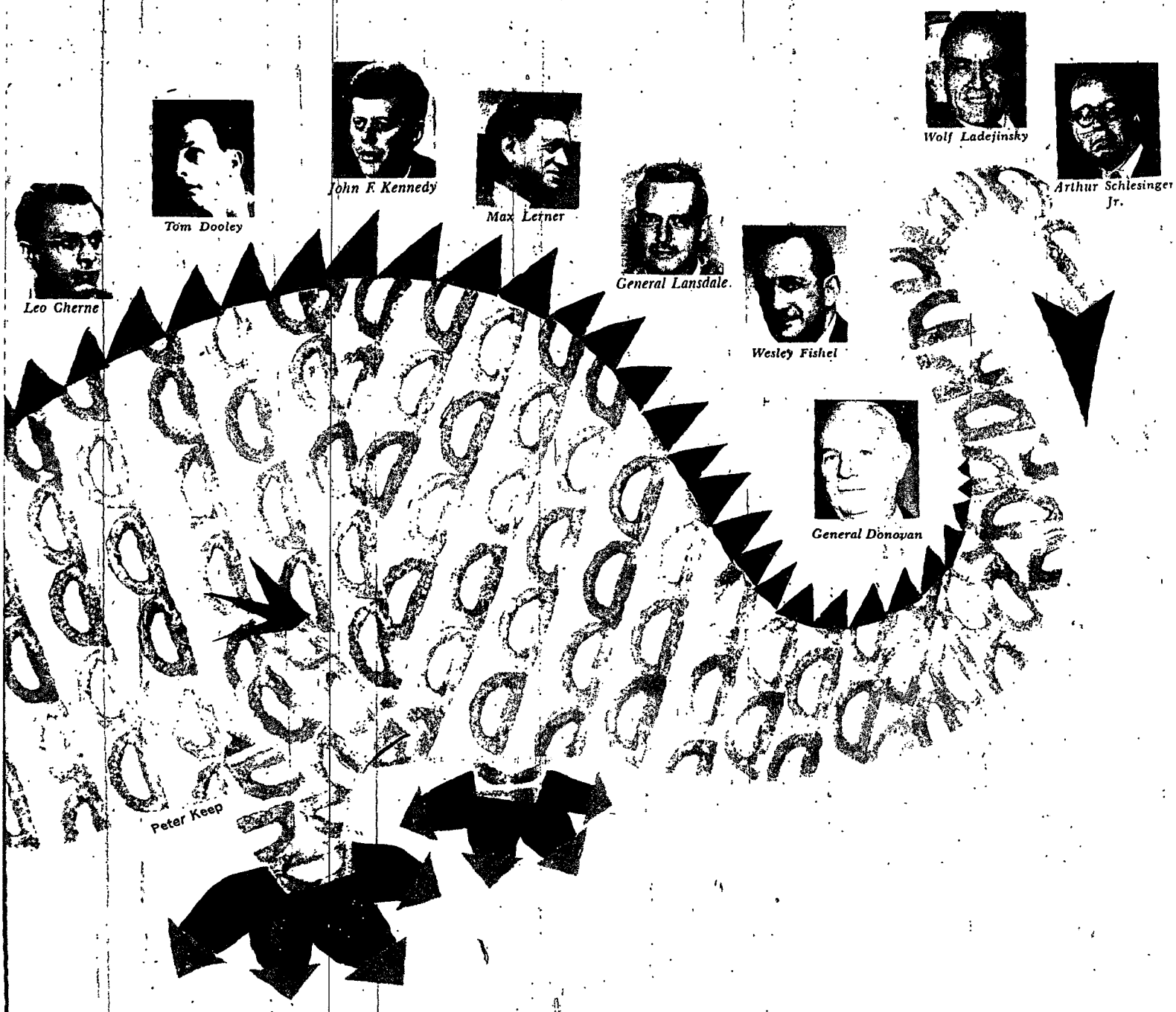
THE "VIETNAM LOBBY"

by Robert Scheer & Warren Hinckle

AMONG THE STACKS of wood-based engravings filed in dusty pyramids in *The New Leader's* editorial offices is a generously-sized, full-faced reproduction of the late Ngo Dinh Diem.

The typed label on the back that used to identify Diem as "Vietnam's Democratic Alternative" has been torn off. The steel plate is worn from rubbing, face down, against the shellacked surface of the public school surplus-type furniture in the magazine's quarters in the old social democratic Rand School Building on New York's still-cobblestoned 15th Street.

The New Leader's cut file is a strange place to begin the story of the "Vietnam Lobby," but then it is a strange



story. It is the history of a small and enthusiastic group of people—including a Cardinal, an ex-Austrian Socialist leader, and a CIA agent—who maneuvered the Eisenhower administration and the American press into supporting the rootless, unpopular and hopeless regime of a despot and believed it actually was all an exercise in democracy. That this group was able to accomplish this against the better thoughts of Eisenhower and over the traditional wariness of the press is testimony to its power and its persuasiveness. Another chapter of the history of the "Vietnam Lobby" is how its thesis came to be accepted by a broad consensus of liberals and intellectuals in America—a consensus that only recently has begun to splinter and is still largely intact.

The thesis is based on an overriding belief in the beauty of the American way of life—and in the nefarious nature of communism. It is the belief that the only reason a nation might vote Communistic is because it hasn't been properly exposed to the Democratic way of life: If a people know democracy, they will vote Democratic. And if it becomes necessary on occasion to tolerate undemocratic means to achieve the ultimate democratic goal—well, it is all for the people's own good.

For *The New Leader*, a liberal, militantly anti-Communist bi-weekly with a strong belief in social reform,

this theory was naturally applicable to the case of Diem, a firm anti-Communist. *The New Leader* in 1959 hailed Diem's "Democratic One Man Rule." To the school of liberalism where anti-communism is the *sine qua non*, the idea of a "Democratic One Man Rule" is not an anomoly.

The story of the "Vietnam Lobby" is a case study in American politics from the mid-1950s to the early 1960s, and the role of *The New Leader* in that period is worth singling out for special attention because the magazine played a smaller but similar role in spreading the thesis of the nation's most famous pressure group—The China Lobby. The disillusioned idealists and ex-radicals that C. Wright Mills once dubbed "The NATO intellectuals" were prominent in both lobbies. Like *The New Leader*, they were willing to believe the best about anything or anyone anti-Communist.

THE HISTORY OF THE "VIETNAM LOBBY" dates from a meeting in a Tokyo tea room in 1950. There Wesley Fishel, a young Michigan State University political scientist, had a serious conversation with Ngo Dinh Diem. Diem was in the 17th year of a self-imposed exile. A sort of Catholic mandarin, he was by family background, personal inclination and training, a member of Vietnam's feudal aristocracy. The Mandarin sense of survival called for cooperation with the French, and Diem had risen to the rank of Governor of Phat Diem Province in the French colonial civil service. A militant anti-Communist, in 1933 he helped the French fight the Communists who were then leading the Vietnamese anti-colonial revolt. But Diem decided that France and Vietnam were incompatible, and went into exile. It is illustrative of his character that he chose voluntary exile rather than remain in his country and fight with the "masses" (which included the Communists) against the French. Diem was a firm believer in the ways of God dictating the acts of men. He would wait for some Hegelian force to sweep him back onto the center-stage of his country's history. Providence, in 1950, took the form of Wesley Fishel.

The young professor was impressed by Diem's long wait to rule his country and his views on independent nationalism, anti-communism and social reform. Fishel urged Diem to come to the United States to seek this government's support. When Diem agreed, Fishel arranged for Michigan State to sponsor the trip. On the Michigan State campus, Diem found kinship and support among both faculty and administration—a relationship which later developed into the university's extensive aid project to Diem's government, where a team of some 20 professors did everything from drafting his budgets to training his secret police. Outside the academic world, Diem found support in the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. Diem's brother, Bishop Can, arranged for the Vietnamese exile to stay in Maryknoll seminaries in New Jersey and New York. This was Cardinal Spellman's territory, and the Cardinal and the Vietnamese Mandarin soon developed a close relationship. And no wonder. Diem was an anti-Communist *and* he was a Catholic. His brother was even a Bishop. One could not approach the Cardinal with better credentials.

In addition to the academicians and the clerics, Diem found to his surprise that he had a strong appeal with American liberals and intellectuals. When Diem was in the United States, from 1950 to 1953, Senator Joseph McCarthy was on the loose and liberals felt it mandatory to show their anti-communism. The liberal-intellectual world was still quaking from the shocks of the loss of China, the Korean War, and the conviction of Alger Hiss. To suggest dealing with Communists—*any* Communists—on any terms was unthinkable in this climate. Yet Communist forces in Asia had monopolized the undeniably popular twin battle cries: nationalism and social reform. The liberals searched for a "third way." They thought they found it in the anti-Communist Diem as the leader of a "free" Vietnam. To think that the Vietnamese people would suddenly give to an absentee aristocrat the credit and gratitude for the fruits of the 20-year anti-colonial war the Communists had been leading against the French was, to say the least, naïvely optimistic. It also ignored Vietnamese history. It proved disastrous. The same tragic results were to occur a decade later when, again ignoring recent history, the Kennedy-Johnson Administrations followed the same fruitless military path of the French before them.

One of the first liberals to openly champion Diem was inveterate traveler, Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas. Justice Douglas had just returned, discouraged, from a visit to Vietnam. An influx of American military aid hadn't helped the French in their losing war against Ho Chi Minh's Viet Minh forces. The Viet Minh clearly had the support of the people; but the Viet Minh were Communist-led, and thus clearly unacceptable as leaders of Vietnam. Then Douglas met Diem in Washington, and became enthusiastic. The Justice arranged breakfast with Senators Mike Mansfield and John F. Kennedy and introduced them to Diem. Both men were taken with him. And during the next few years, before Dien Bien Phu, both Mansfield and Kennedy were extremely critical of the French presence in Vietnam and of the Eisenhower Administration's support of them.

They called for an "independent nationalist alternative," a phrase which later was to become a cliché. Kennedy, in a major speech immediately before the Geneva conference in April of 1954, warned against any negotiated solution that would allow participation in the Vietnamese government by Ho Chi Minh. The Communists, he said, would then eventually take over because they were so popular. Instead, he called for an independent—i.e., a Democratic and anti-Communist—Vietnam, supported by the United States. This Vietnam Diem was to lead.

The Geneva Conference, of course, called for no such thing. It affirmed the independence of the colonial government of Vietnam and called for an end to hostilities. A sort of interim trustee arrangement was agreed upon whereby the French would preside in the south and the Viet Minh in the north for two years, ending in national elections in 1956 when the Vietnamese people would choose their own government. Those elections were never held because the "Vietnam Lobby" didn't want them. Clearly, Ho Chi Minh would have won a popular vote—and that would have been the end of the "independent nationalistic alternative."

Thus men as diverse in their backgrounds as Spellman, Douglas and Kennedy—not to mention John Foster Dulles—came to support an aggressive policy against a popular adversary in the name of freedom and to believe in it.

THE TELEPHONE OPERATOR in the Chancery was used to such things, but even she blinked a little when Cardinal Spellman picked up the telephone and said: "Get me Joe Kennedy." When these two powerful men got on the line together, one winter afternoon in 1955, they settled quickly, as men of decision do, the steps that had to be taken to swing the wavering Eisenhower Administration solidly behind the young regime of Premier Ngo Dinh Diem. The report of this extraordinary conversation comes from Joseph Buttinger, an official of the International Rescue Committee, who was sitting in Spellman's office. Buttinger had just returned from Saigon, and he brought bad news. Diem's administration was in trouble. Buttinger thought Diem was the only hope of Vietnam, but needed to consolidate his power. There was opposition from the Vietnamese, from the French, and from some key Americans. Diem could not survive without increased United States support, yet the present United States commitment appeared in danger of waning. Eisenhower's special Ambassador to Vietnam, General Lawton Collins, was openly sceptical of Diem's ability to establish a viable regime. The journalist Joseph Alsop felt Diem's base of support was too narrow to effectively rival the popular Viet Minh. Eisenhower himself was not particularly sympathetic to Diem. The General recognized Ho Chi Minh's popularity, and was opposed to the effort to install an "alternative" as both undemocratic and of dubious success, as he later remarked in his book *Mandate for Change*.

But the Eisenhower Administration, not noted for its rigidity of purpose, was vulnerable to the political pressures marshalled by Cardinal Spellman and the elder Kennedy. Kennedy arranged for Buttinger to meet with Senator Mansfield and some key State Department personnel in Washington. His son, Senator John F. Kennedy, was in California, but Buttinger had a long conversation with the Senator's assistant, Ted Sorenson. Spellman took care of the press. He set up meetings for Buttinger with editors of The New York Times, the editorial board of the Herald-Tribune, and key editors of both *Time* and *Life*. Two days later the Times printed an editorial containing the Buttinger thesis. Buttinger himself took pen in hand and wrote an article for *The Reporter* praising Diem as democracy's "alternative" in Southeast Asia.

To fully appreciate Buttinger's role in the "Vietnam Lobby" it is necessary to go back to Diem's ascendance to the premiership in July, 1954. The new premier from his first day in office began to crush all opposition and concentrate power within a small, nepotistic group. Diem's targets included the private armies of the religious sects, anti-Communist Vietnamese leaders who made the mistake of also being anti-Diem, and the identifiable Viet Minh partisans remaining in South Vietnam. This did not make for popular acclaim but Diem wasn't looking for popularity. He knew that his base of support was minuscule, that he would have trouble with the majority of the population who had been supporting the Viet Minh in the long war against the French. So force was the only way he could effectively ready his people for the "Democratic alternative." His authoritarian tactics were not widely reported in the American press until eight years later, when he fell from favor.

Diem's strong-man rule in South Vietnam gave the United States two policy choices. It could keep the Viet Minh from power, block the scheduled 1956 national elections, prevent unification of the country, hang on and trust for the best. Or it could follow the new French policy of flexibility in a hopeless situation, allow the elections, learn to live with an unquestionably greater Communist influence in Vietnam, and accept the necessary parallel of a lessening of Western power there.

There were arguments for both positions within the Eisenhower Administration. Helpful in pushing the United States into a "hard line" of support for the

authoritarian Diem was an unusual array of visitors to Saigon in the early days of the new premier's rule.

Cardinal Spellman, who told an American Legion Convention that the Geneva agreements meant "taps" for freedom in Southeast Asia, flew to Vietnam to hand-deliver the first check of Catholic Relief Agency aid. Wesley Fishel, the Michigan State University professor, took up residence in the Presidential Palace and became one of Diem's chief advisors. Also bedding down in the palace was Wolf Ladejinsky, a New Dealer who had stayed on in the Agriculture Department only to be plowed under in the McCarthy period. Diem hired Ladejinsky to study land reform, which convinced many American liberals that Diem was serious about social reforms. (These reforms proved later to be not only inefficient but laughable. Diem tried to restore the colonial property balance by returning to absentee landlords land that the bewildered peasants thought they owned—land the Communists had given them during the revolutionary period.)

Another important visitor to Diem was Leo Cherne, the President of the International Rescue Committee. Founded to help refugees from Germany in the Hitler period, the Committee turned during the Cold War to aiding refugees from Communist countries. Cherne spent two and a half weeks in Vietnam and came away convinced that Diem had great potential as an anti-Communist leader. He then sent his assistant, Joseph Buttinger, to set up a Vietnam operation for the Committee. There Buttinger met Colonel (now General) Edward Lansdale, the CIA's Man in Saigon, hero of Eugene Burdick's *The Ugly American* and villain of Graham Greene's *The Quiet American*. Landsdale, a gregarious former San Francisco advertising man who believes in "selling" the American way abroad, is given sole credit in the recent book on the CIA, *The Invisible Government*, for the United States support of Diem. That is not quite fair. It ignores the hard work of Cardinal Spellman and Buttinger. It was the unlikely triumvirate of the CIA man, the Cardinal and Buttinger, an ex-Austrian Socialist leader, that was responsible for forming United States policy behind Diem.

Landsdale went through channels. He convinced CIA Director Allen Dulles of Diem's worth. Dulles talked to his brother, the Secretary of State. And John Foster Dulles brought the word to Eisenhower.

Spellman's influence was important in certifying Diem as a solid anti-Communist, no small thing in the McCarthy era.

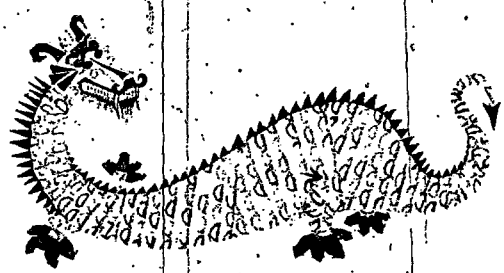
Buttinger made the contacts in the ex-radical and the liberal circles which were to eventually support the consensus of the "Vietnam Lobby" for the next six years.

Buttinger's background is important in understanding the eagerness with which he accepted Diem as the "alternative." A disillusioned Socialist, Buttinger saw in the stocky, five-foot-five premier the nationalist answer to communism that he had himself attempted to provide as an Austrian Socialist leader in the 1930s. Buttinger was then one Gustav Richter, the provincial youth leader of the Social-Democratic party which had been forced underground by the waves of victorious Fascism. Buttinger fought back, but it was an embittering experience. His one accomplishment, he relates in his memoirs, *In The Twilight of Socialism*, was to halt the spread of the Communists. But just when Buttinger had reorganized his party, the Nazis goose-stepped in. He fled to Paris and then to New York, and in flight the certainty of his world of Socialist politics vanished, and so did his ideology. Buttinger did not join the Socialist Party in America, though in a continuing search for new ideas to replace his fallen Marxist certainty he dabbled in Socialist politics as an editor of *Dissent* magazine.

He took to Diem with the enthusiasm that can only be mustered by an ex-radical who, once again, has something to believe in. He had been in Vietnam only four days when, at Landsdale's request, he met Diem. He was to meet with him frequently during the ensuing three months. Lansdale took Buttinger under his wing and introduced him to the top security people in Diem's government and the Vietnamese Army. This convinced Buttinger that Diem had the strength to remain in power, if only the United States would give him complete support.

Before Buttinger left for the United States in December, 1954, he had several five and six hour conversations with Diem. He returned a man with a mission: to settle for nothing less than a total commitment to Diem by the United States.

With the aid of Lansdale and Cardinal Spellman, he succeeded, and the "Vietnam Lobby" was born.



THE "VIETNAM LOBBY" was an unusual alliance of ex-left intellectuals, conservative generals and liberal politicians. Its primary goal was to convince the public that "free Vietnam" was accomplishing miracles and could withstand the Red onslaught if the United States would continue its support. One year after Buttinger's return from Vietnam, in the fall of 1955, the "lobby" achieved a measure of formal organization with the establishment of the American Friends of Vietnam. The Friends, for the next six years, were in the forefront of the fight to maintain Diem's regime as a "showcase of democracy."

Like all such organizations, the American Friends of

Vietnam had a letterhead with a string of impressive names running in small print down the side. But the Friends' list was unusual because it was virtually a roll call of the liberal center: Senators John F. Kennedy and Richard Neuberger, intellectuals Max Lerner and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Representatives Emmanuel Celler and Edna Kelly, diplomat Angier Biddle Duke. For balance, there was Socialist Norman Thomas (who has since changed his position radically) and ultra-conservative J. Bracken Lee. Two famous generals, "Wild Bill" Donovan and "Iron Mike" O'Daniel, were co-chairmen.

The Friends was run by its 14-member executive committee. An analysis of the committee reveals a curious relationship between the Friends, the International Rescue Committee, and a New York fund raiser and public relations man named Harold Oram. The relationship is extraordinary because the executive committee of the International Rescue Committee, the executive committee of the American Friends of Vietnam, and Harold Oram's executive personnel were all pretty much the same people.

It was Oram, then public relations man for the International Rescue Committee and a former promoter of '30s leftist causes, who later became associated with anti-Communist and liberal center groups, whom Buttinger first approached for help when he returned from Vietnam in late 1954. Oram arranged through a friend at the Catholic Relief Agency in Washington for Buttinger to meet with Cardinal Spellman.

Two months before the organization of the American Friends of Vietnam was announced, Oram's public relations firm signed a contract to represent the Vietnamese government for $3,000 a month plus expenses. They stayed on the job until 1961. Oram was a member of the executive committee of the American Friends of Vietnam. So was Elliot Newcomb, his partner at the time the contract was signed with the Diem regime. Newcomb left the firm a year later, but remained on the executive committee and was subsequently treasurer. The Executive Secretary, and later Corporation Secretary and Assistant Treasurer of the American Friends of Vietnam, was a young man named Gilbert Jonas—Oram's account executive and "campaign director" on the Vietnam account. Oram and Jonas were registered as foreign agents acting for the Republic of Vietnam during the same period they held key executive positions on the Friends, a seemingly independent committee dedicated to the blameless purpose of working "to extend more broadly a mutual understanding of Vietnamese and American history, cultural customs and democratic institutions."

The interlocking directorates of the International Rescue Committee and the Friends was more to be expected than the strange connection between the Republic of Vietnam and the Friends of Vietnam. Nine of the fourteen directors of the Friends were also members of the Board of Directors of the International Rescue Committee, or were its employees. Both Leo Cherne and Joseph Buttinger were on the Friends' board. Cardinal Spellman was represented by Msgr. Hartnett, a key official of the Catholic Relief Agency. Two writers for *The New Leader*, Norbert Muhlen and Sol Sanders, were also on the executive committee of the Friends. The anti-communism and quest for social reform that characterized *The New Leader* was typical of the philosophies of men on these two groups: New Deal liberals like Leo Cherne and ex-radicals like Buttinger, Oram and Jonas. Jonas later became public affairs director of the International Rescue Committee, and served on Kennedy's presidential campaign staff in 1960 as an advisor on minority group problems.

Oram earned his $3,000 a month. Diem was not always an easy man to keep popular. His consolidation of power in Vietnam had authoritarian overtones, and his off-the-cuff remarks were often blatantly undemocratic. The first task of the "Vietnam Lobby" was to package Diem as a commodity palatable to the American public. The packaging operation assumed grand scale proportions during Diem's triumphal "official visit" to the United States in 1957. Diem landed aboard President Eisenhower's personal plane, addressed a joint session of Congress, then took off for New York and breakfast with Cardinal Spellman. Mayor Wagner hailed him as the man "to whom freedom is the very breath of life itself." At a dinner jointly sponsored by the International Rescue Committee and the American Friends of Vietnam, Angier Biddle Duke presented Diem with the Admiral Richard E. Byrd Award for "inspired leadership in the cause of the free world."

Diem's American advisors took care that his speeches were liberally salted with democratic clichés. Many of Diem's speeches were written by Buttinger, others by Sol Sanders. Sanders, a Friends' director who was writing articles on Southeast Asia for *The New Leader*, had been close to Diem when the Vietnamese leader was in exile in America during the early 1950s. They enjoyed a poignant reunion, recalling those more difficult times when both were low on funds and Diem would come into New York by train from the Maryknoll seminary in Ossining and have tea with Sanders in a Greenwich Village cafe. (Sanders, now an Asia correspondent for *U. S. News and World Report*, was one of Diem's few friends who remained loyal to the end—even when he fell from U. S. favor. To Sanders' credit, he resigned from the American Friends of Vietnam when the executive committee fired off a congratulatory telegram to the generals who had deposed and murdered Diem. The telegram arrived while Diem's body was still, literally, warm.) But in 1957 Diem was the certified President of South Vietnam, and during three years in office had managed to crush rival religious sects and independent

politicians and surround himself with a court of American advisors—Michigan State University professors, military advisors, A.I.D. officials, Catholic Welfare aides.

Diem, however, had achieved little else in three years in office. But during his visit to America the "lobby" promoted the "miracle" myth. Everything that Diem did or attempted, was described as a miracle. Articles appeared in magazines, from *The Reporter* to *Look*, hailing the "miracles" of political stability, land reform, refugee settlement and economic development allegedly achieved by the Diem regime. But the "miracle" was actually only a miracle of public relations.

The "Vietnam Lobby" also perpetuated a second myth—that free elections for all Vietnam, which would include the Communists, and called for in the Geneva agreements, were simply a means of enslaving the free people of Vietnam. Since the Communist-backed Viet Minh would almost certainly win, because they had duped the populace, the United States was actually striking a blow for freedom by keeping the people of Vietnam from holding a national election. We were "saving" them from themselves, and at the same time teaching them the golden way of American democracy through Diem's "showcase" government. This type of rationale Kipling used to write poems about.

In many ways the most important of the myths promoted by the "Vietnam Lobby" was the refugee myth. The dramatic story of one million refugees fleeing to the south from the Communist north supported the theory of the North Vietnam leaders as "devils" and Diem's regime as the sanctuary of freedom. Naive, well-meaning publicists like Dr. Tom Dooley projected this view with extraordinary success in the United States (*Ramparts*, January 1965). What Americans were not told was that the refugees were almost all Catholics, many of whom had fought with the French against the Communist Viet Minh, and who realized they could get better treatment under the Catholic Diem. These refugees were settled and well cared for through extensive American aid, becoming a privileged minority in South Vietnam. But Diem had to use repressive police measures to keep in line the remainder of the population (13 million) which did not share the Catholics' visceral hatred of Communism, and in fact were sympathetic toward the Viet Minh. It took an equally dramatic event—the protest of self-immolation by a Bhuddist monk—to center attention on Diem's preferential treatment of the Catholic minority.

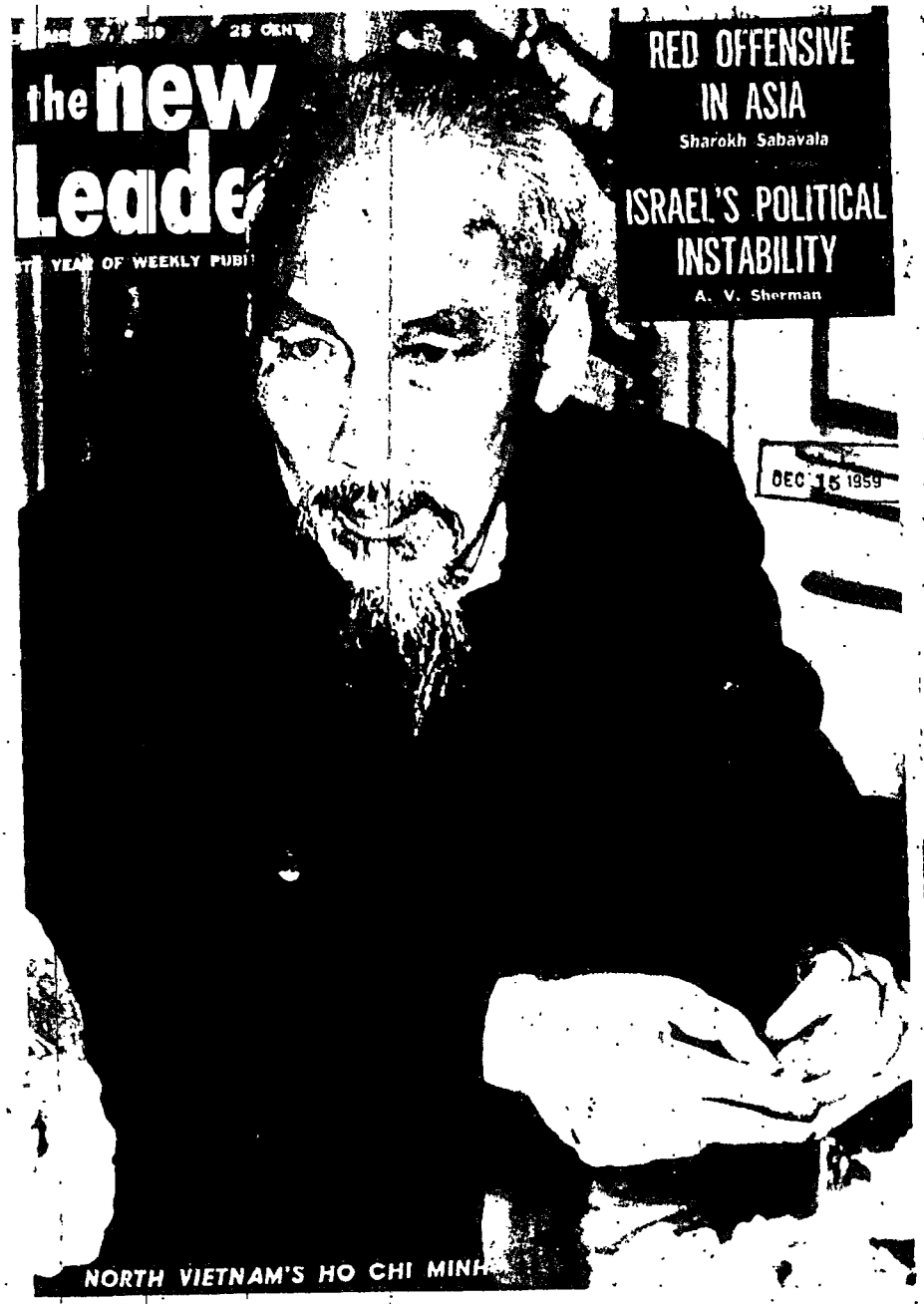
The "lobby" had a myth for almost every occasion. When things began to go badly for Diem in 1961, the Kennedy Administration rationalized the radical increase in this nation's military involvement in Vietnam by adhering to the myth that aggression by the Communists had wrecked Diem's progressive programs, and even forced him to adopt some totalitarian means—temporarily, because of the crisis, of course. So persuasive and pervasive were the myths postulated by the "Vietnam Lobby" that few people were willing to believe that the source of the trouble might lie with Diem himself.

THE CROWD in Madison Square Garden was dressed like it was a coming out party instead of a political rally. But the tweeds and swept-back coiffures were proper because the Young Americans for Freedom's big "Tshombe Freedom Rally" in October of 1962 was something of a coronation ceremony: the right wing college group was presenting awards to its heroes. John Wayne got an award. So did John Dos Passos and Strom Thurmond. And so did Marvin Liebman.

Marvin Liebman is a 41-year-old ex-Communist-turned-publicist for right wing causes—apparently a good publicist, judging from the way the YAF chose to honor him. Liebman provides an interesting link between the activities of the two great Cold War pressure groups: the China Lobby and the "Vietnam Lobby." A late-blooming member of the China Lobby, Liebman quit the Communist party in 1945 but it was not until 1957, while working with the International Rescue Committee, that his politics took a sharp curve to the right. Liebman, working for Harold Oram's public relations firm (his name appeared on Oram's stationery alongside that of Gilbert Jonas during the middle '50s), was instrumental in setting up the Committee of One Million Against The Admission of Communist China to the U.N.

Liebman became a sort of right wing establishment man. He was Secretary of the Committee of One Million, an advisor to the Young Americans for Freedom, a collaborator with *National Review* editor William F. Buckley Jr. in setting up the Committee for Freedom of All Peoples—which was outdone in its protest over Krushchev's visit to the United States only by the *National Review's* black-bordered cover.

The China Lobby, like the "Vietnam Lobby," fused liberal and right wing elements in the impassioned promotion of an anti-Communist leader (for Diem, read Chiang Kai-shek), whose prime and perhaps sole qualification for leadership was his anti-communism. Ross Y.



The New Leader (1959)

Koen, in his book *The China Lobby in American Politics* (remarkably unavailable since shortly after its 1960 publication), names among the prime outlets for pro-Chiang propaganda, *Life*, *The Reader's Digest*—and *The New Leader*.

The New Leader's role in the China Lobby became a cause celebre in 1963 when Senator William Fulbright's Foreign Relations Committee released testimony stating that Chiang Kai-shek's New York publicity firm had paid *The New Leader* $3000, in 1958, to publish a pro-Chiang article. There are two conflicting accounts. One was given to Senator Fulbright's Committee by Mr. Hamilton Wright Jr., a principal in the publicity firm then working for Chiang.

"...as I recall, they (*New Leader* editors) approached me and said, 'Look, you are representing the Republic of China. We have this wonderful article that has been written, and we are going to put this out as a special supplement. Now, it is going to go; you know our circulation is to the intellectual group and, gee, we just don't have enough money to get this into print all the way. We can certainly use a contribution.'"*

The other version is *The New Leader's*. It is even more interesting because it blames the whole thing on Marvin Liebman. S. M. Levitas, *The New Leader's* longtime editor and a bitter anti-Communist out of the East European Socialist tradition, died in 1961. The magazine's new editor, Myron Kolatch, wrote Fulbright and said that a check of the files revealed no such payoff. Kolatch said that the $3000 came to *The New Leader* from the American-Asia Education Exchange in connection with an article "Communist China: Power and Prospects," by Dr. Richard L. Walker. The article was to appear in a special issue of the magazine and Levitas asked the Exchange to purchase 10,000 reprints for $3000 to help finance the issue. Levitas was a mem-

**Activities of Nondiplomatic Representatives of Foreign Principals in the United States, Part 7, Page 725 Government Printing Office Washington 1963.*

ber of the Exchange. The author, Dr. Walker, was on its Board of Directors and Marvin Liebman, whom the New York Times described as "a publicist connected with Nationalist Chinese causes," was the Secretary-Treasurer. The Exchange, in fact, operated out of Liebman's publicity office. Kolatch said that he subsequently learned that the Exchange got the $3000 from Liebman who got it, in turn, from Chiang's publicity firm. *The New Leader*, Kolatch said, had not been aware that the funds originated in the Nationalist China camp.

The China-Lobby/"Vietnam Lobby" syndrome came full circle in the Spring of 1964 when Liebman was revealed as the promoter of an advertisement in the Washington Star, signed by the parents of American soldiers killed in Vietnam, which called for an extension of the war.

The New Leader, in recent years, has lost much of the blind anti-communism which allowed it to accept too readily the positions of the China Lobby and the "Vietnam Lobby," according to author Paul Jacobs:

"*The New Leader* today is much different than it was under Levitas. For Levitas, the primary role of the magazine was fighting the Communists and very often he subordinated all else to it. Considering the bitter experience the non-Communist left had with the Communists, Levitas' position was understandable. But the tragedy was that it led not only to an obsession but to an inability to accept the fact that changes were taking place inside the Communist world. Today *The New Leader* does have a better understanding of the problems the world faces and an article is no longer measured only by how anti-Communist it may be."

But *The New Leader* school of anti-communism—shared in the '50s by *The Reporter* and other liberal publications and such groups as the International Rescue Committee and the Congress for Cultural Freedom—is important because it helped to shape the Cold War as we live it today. When World War II ended, the State Department and the Pentagon had to formulate policies for a world where the Communists were now the enemy—but where splinter Socialist movements, both "democratic" and "undemocratic," were emerging all over Europe and Asia. It was obvious that we couldn't be against *everybody*. Instrumental in helping decide where to draw the line was the circle of ex-radicals and disillusioned intellectuals, and social democrats such as Levitas, whose principled anti-communism dated from the creation of the Third International. Where a State Department career man might be insensitive to the crimes of the Third International against the intellectuals, old Bolsheviks and the Jews, a former East European Socialist like Levitas could speak with passion about who were the good guys and who were the bad guys—and which side the United States should support in the name of anti-communism.

The same liberals who backed Diem fought Senator Joseph McCarthy, but they fought McCarthy on his own battleground of anti-communism. This was the only ground acceptable in the hate-climate of the '50s and the anti-communism of the ex-radical turned "liberal" had paramount influence in the hard line of America's post-war politics.

The "Vietnam Lobby" was the ultimate product of this school of liberal Cold War anti-communism. Unlike the businessmen, missionaries and military politicians that joined the China Lobby for self-seeking reasons, the members of the "Vietnam Lobby" were True Believers. They were on a Crusade for Democracy. Looking at the world through anti-Red glasses, they convinced themselves that a Diem could be a Democrat. They had trouble convincing Eisenhower, so they pressured his administration into line. Then they set out to convince the country. They succeeded, and the myths that they created—that we were "asked" to step in by the Vietnamese people, that we are protecting "democracy" by blocking elections—remain long after Diem to haunt the State Department White Paper, and President Johnson's speeches.

Senator Fulbright, in a recent speech on ideology and foreign policy, cited a thought of William Makepeace Thackeray that applies with extraordinary precision to the "Vietnam Lobby": "The wicked are wicked, no doubt," wrote Thackeray, "and they go astray and they fall, and they come by their deserts; but who can tell the mischief which the very virtuous do?"

RAMPARTS' *Robert Scheer recently completed an 18-month survey of Vietnam for the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions. The foregoing article is based largely upon his findings, set forth in full in a forthcoming Center publication.*